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Your local county agent, SCS, ASC, or
FHA representative or a member of your
local board of soil conservation district
supervisors may help you get further
information on the Great Plains Con-
servation Program.

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the GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

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Soil Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Why farmers and ranchers like the Great Plains Conservation Program

MORE AND MORE farmers and ranchers in the Great Plains are finding in the Great Plains Conservation Program a faster and less costly way of solving erosion problems and making yields and income more dependable.

Especially in time of drought—and Plains history shows there is nearly always a drought somewhere in the Plains—the Great Plains Conservation Program is proving effective in protecting soil and conserving moisture. Thus drought, when it comes, is a less costly blow.

Here are reasons why farmers and ranchers in the Plains are finding the new program a real help:

- A farmer or rancher—with cost-share help because of the Plains importance to the whole Nation—can apply a complete farm or ranch conservation plan at a stepped-up pace. This gives him the best drought defense science and farmer-rancher experience have been able to work out for agriculture in the Plains.
- He has in the Great Plains Conservation Program a long-term contract that guarantees cost sharing to complete his conservation plan. It is especially suited to the man who depends entirely on farming or ranching for a livelihood.
- He can get up to an average of \$2,500 a year as the Government's contribution in cost-share payments for work on his farm or ranch. The minimum contract period is 3 years, the maximum 10. (If all needed work can be done in less than 3 years, chances are some other program will fit his needs.)
- The contract can be modified to meet changing conditions.
- He gets prompt cost-share payments as he completes portions of his soil and water conservation plan.

The Great Plains Conservation Program is a voluntary one. Its core is a complete soil and water conservation plan, based (1) on the soil, the plant conditions, the available water and (2) on the problems and the needs of the farmer or rancher.

At the beginning, a farmer or rancher enters into an agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out his conservation plan. He agrees to apply the needed practices according to a schedule which he works out with the help of men trained in the best farming and ranching methods known for his area.

The Great Plains Conservation Program is geared to the going program of the soil conservation districts in the area. It makes use of help from other programs, agencies, and organizations at county, State, and Federal levels.



Blowout area in an abandoned field that will be returned to grass under the Great Plains Conservation Program. WYO-703



Overseeding rundown range under Great Plains Conservation Program cost sharing. OKLA-11200



Dugouts help protect the vegetation by distributing the grazing and making good range management easier. SD-561

Stubble mulching is required where needed in Great Plains Conservation Program contracts. COLO-11173



Priorities for assistance

THE LIMIT on total funds and the basic purpose of the Great Plains Conservation Program—soil and water conservation—make priorities necessary. The region has 12 to 14 million acres now being cultivated that, because of the hazards of soil and climate, need to be converted to permanent plant cover. Large areas of rangeland need reseeding and other improvements in vegetation. And Congress authorized a maximum of \$150 million for cost-sharing payments over a period ending in 1971.

High Priority Units

- Farms and ranches having either cropland unsuited to further cropping or eroding range needing seeding, or both.
- Units having cropland suited to cultivation but needing treatment to control erosion and conserve moisture.
- Units having problems that can be solved by several operators working together—if the landowners agree to act in unison.

Medium Priority Units

- Units having rangeland that requires control of invading plants—including brush—followed by seeding and conservation management.

Low Priority Units

- Units that are entirely or mostly irrigated land.
- Units mainly of nonirrigated land having only slight erosion problems and needing a minimum of conservation treatment.
- Units of rangeland in good to excellent condition.
- Units with conservation plans already or so nearly applied that they can be completed with help from other sources.

Cost sharing

RATES OF cost sharing are a measure of how urgent a practice is in the area. Rates are determined for each county. Some are as high as 80 percent of the average cost of the practice in the county.

Additional aid

WHEN CONGRESS gave leadership of this program to the Soil Conservation Service, it also asked that it be carried out in close cooperation with other interested local, State, and Federal governmental agencies and with all other groups and individuals who can help.

The Great Plains Conservation Program is being coordinated with the "work plans" of soil conservation districts operating in the counties designated by the Secretary of Agriculture for the program, as well as with other Department of Agriculture programs such as ACP and the Conservation Reserve. You can use the cost-sharing provisions of ACP or the Conservation Reserve instead of the Great Plains Conservation Program if you feel one or a combination of them will be more helpful in carrying out your plan.

Each county program committee is made up of the local SCS representative, the chairman of the county ASC Committee, the county FHA supervisor, the county agricultural agent, the supervisors of the soil conservation district, and others closely associated with soil conservation in the county.

Great Plains Conservation Program practices



Contour stripcropping.

ND-589

Gross seeded for protection against wind and water erosion. From 12 to 14 million acres of Great Plains cropland should be shifted to gross.

OKLA-11199



Reorganizing irrigation systems.

ND-716

Seeding grass in former cropland.

OKLA-11204



Rangeland brush control.

TEX-49692



Livestock water well.

WYO-502



Field stripcropping; tree windbreaks.

MONT-202



Practices

HERE, IN BRIEF FORM, is the national list of soil and water conservation cost-share practices. From this list, each State and each county program committee chooses the ones that make best local use of the Great Plains Conservation Program.

- Seeding grass on land unsuited or no longer needed for cropland.
- Field stripcropping.
- Contour stripcropping.
- Contour farming of nonterraced land.
- Mechanical reseeding of rangeland.
- Planting trees or shrubs to protect land.
- Sod waterways.
- Terraces.
- Diversion terraces, ditches, or dikes.
- Mechanical treatment of range or pastures to prevent soil loss, retard runoff, and improve water penetration.
- Dams to heal or prevent gullying or retard or reduce runoff of water.
- Structures for the protection of outlets and water channels that dispose of excess water.
- Protective structures to prevent erosion or flood damage to farmland from streams.
- Ditches or dikes to prevent water erosion, permit beneficial use of water, or to replenish ground-water supply.
- Reorganizing irrigation systems to conserve water and prevent erosion.
- Leveling of irrigated land.
- Building or improving dams, pits, or ponds for irrigation water.
- Lining irrigation ditches.
- Livestock water wells.
- Developing springs and seeps for livestock water.
- Building or improving dams, pits, or ponds to protect vegetative cover.
- Pipelines for livestock water.
- Controlling competitive shrubs on range or pasture land.
- Permanent fences.

The purpose of each of these 24 practices is to insure or permit wise use of soil and water resources. Certain of the practices supplement others and are necessary to achieve the overall goals of solving erosion problems and making yields and income more dependable.

Annual, recurring types of conservation practices such as stubble-mulch tillage for cropland and proper use of range are not eligible for cost sharing. But they are vital in keeping erosion at a minimum and maintaining yields and income and are required where needed in Great Plains Conservation Program contract agreements.

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